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NUMBER 1

43rd Legislature to Act on Several SRS Bills

Montana's 43rd Legislative Assembly is back in session and will have under consideration several bills affecting the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

This is the first consecutive session of the legislature which adjourned last March. Under Montana's new constitution the

law-making body will meet every year rather than once every two years as in the past.

Last year the legislature considered and passed more social legislation than ever before. Receiving the legislature's approval was the Medically Needy Program, a plan which was Governor Thomas Judge's top priority

for social legislation.

This program extends Medicaid coverage to persons just above the welfare standard. It also allows persons with higher incomes to be eligible for medical assistance if they spend on medical bills all of their income down to one-third above welfare.

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THE SECOND ASSEMBLY of Montana's 43rd Legislature is in session in Helena. Before the law-makers are a number of bills affecting the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

Photo by Steve Helmbrecht



Government Sanctions Irk Assistance Head

The ire of a state public assistance administrator has been raised by the federal government's announcement it intends to impose monetary sanctions this spring against states whose error rate in welfare payments is more than the tolerance level prescribed by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

This seems to violate a long, established federal-state partnership, says Jack Carlson, administrator, Economic Assistance Division, Montana Social and Rehabilitation Services.

"We recognize that mistakes are made, and we want to minimize them. We have the responsibility for stewardship of the taxpayers' dollars. Certainly we want to save money, but not at the expense of the recipients and the state."

Montana's rate of error, notes Carlson, is about the same as the present national average but it is higher than the standard recently set by HEW.

Carlson has been angered by the steps proposed by HEW because he feels the focus of the federal government appears to be on saving money rather than on serving people in need.

However, he stresses that improvements in service and efficiency must be made constantly for the benefit of both the taxpayers and the public assistance recipients.

"It is the function of this division," he says, "to concen-



JACK CARLSON, administrator, economic assistance.

trate first on service to people. There can be so much emphasis on efficiency that the people get lost in the shuffle."

The method of checking for correct implementation of welfare regulations is known as quality control. It consists of a system with guidelines written by each state and monitored by the federal government. It is directed primarily toward the Aid to Families of Dependent Children (AFDC) Program.

Montana, Carlson points out, has written strict regulations compared to other states. "This," he adds, "increases our chances of error over those states with looser control."

In order to improve the state's welfare system for recipients and taxpayers, Montana is putting into effect several improvements expected to reduce the number of

errors made by both the recipients and the staff which determines eligibility.

Corrective actions on Montana's part, Carlson says, involve increasing the skills to determine eligibility correctly and increasing the knowledge of recipients regarding what they must report to the welfare department. Personnel from the state economic assistance office worked in the four large counties reviewing cases and training staff. Says Carlson, "A number of clients voluntarily left the rolls, and other cases were closed by the staff."

Carlson cites the system itself as the real villain responsible for the errors. He says in most cases it is not the intent of the recipient to defraud the welfare system. However, to help prevent the system from being duped the 1973 legislature passed a law giving the Department of Revenue authority to investigate and prosecute cases of suspected welfare fraud.

Another move by SRS to correct errors will be made in March with the installation of a new computer processing system. Known as the Montana Income Maintenance System, the operation will use the central state computer and will be able to quickly compare welfare statistics with other types of payrolls in the state, for instance unemployment compensation, social security and industrial accident. Application processing will be speeded up and faster closures of cases can be made when necessary.

Carlson states his staff is dedicated to providing good service to people and puts in long

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Reported Mistakes In SSI Payments Will Be Corrected In Future Checks

Persons who found errors in their January supplemental security income checks—in the form of underpayments or overpayments—should notify their county welfare and district social security offices.

Checks bearing overpayments will have to be returned to the social security offices, corrections made and new checks issued, according to Mike Caplis, chief, Eligibility Determination Bureau, Montana Social and Rehabilitation Services.

Anyone receiving an underpayment also should notify the welfare and social security offices and the balance will be made up on a future check.

Most individuals, notes Caplis, were given prior notice of what their check would be so if the amount received didn't correspond the discrepancy should be reported.

All of the first month's checks under the new federal SSI program, which was transferred from state welfare, were mailed out by January 2.

A number of errors, however, have turned up in payments particularly to persons in nursing homes, Caplis declares. They are the result of corrections and updates not being correctly made by the computer system and will be straightened out in future checks. Payments to persons in their own dwellings seem to be all right, he says.

Other than the mixup with the nursing homes the conversion of welfare payments from the state to the federal SSI program went fairly smoothly, Caplis says.

No one who received a state welfare check in December should be getting less than that amount from SSI. If such is the case the state will supplement the federal money. When a supplement is necessary, the amount is indicated on the check.

The state, for instance, supplements in the situation of a person living in a residence rent free, such as with relatives. State welfare payments were \$92 and the SSI payments are \$86, so the state pays \$6 to make up the difference. Montana also supplements people in adult foster care where the state paid \$195 and the SSI payment is \$140.

Caplis points out that in a circumstance where the husband for example, is getting supplemental security income, the amount he receives cannot be deducted from welfare payments to his wife and children.

Persons who think they qualify to receive supplemental security income should apply at their local social security office. Persons with income above SSI standards who might qualify for only medical assistance still may make application at the county welfare office.

Toll Free Number For Legislative Info.

Montana citizens with questions about pending bills can dial a toll-free telephone number for information, announce officials of the Montana Legislature.

Information on bills, hearing dates or related matters can be obtained by using the service. The telephone number is 1-800-332-3435.

Steve Graham, information officer for the legislature, says the service does not provide for relaying messages to senators or representatives.

Legislators may be reached by calling prepaid to 449-3822. Legislators also may be contacted by letters or telegrams addressed in care of the State Legislature, Helena, 59601.

Advisory Council On Poverty Formed In State

An 11-member Montana Poverty Advisory Council has been established under the Department of Intergovernmental Relations, according to IGR director Frank McChesney.

Purpose of the new agency, says McChesney, is to review proposed grants and existing programs relating to Montana's poor and to suggest goals for state government in combatting poverty.

Appointments were made on the recommendations of six low-income groups in the state. The council members, according to their organization, are:

—Montana State Low-Income Organization: Hugh Standley, Missoula; Sharon Vingom, Butte and Frances Gosney, Augusta.

—Montana United Indian Association: Kathryn Turcotte, Havre, and Ed Barbeau, Helena.

(Continued on page 4)

Governor's Day Care Fund Has Assisted 13 Centers

Most recent recipient of a financial grant from the Governor's Day Care Fund is the St. Ignatius Day Care Center.

Sen. Jean Turnage, R-Lake County, has given a check for \$1,000 to the center which is described as one of the best in Montana by Jim Pippard, state director, Community Coordinated Child Care (4 C's).

law passed by last year's legislature to include counties as well as cities as providers of funds. He said that after a year of using only city money for the centers throughout the state, the local funding has been an apparent success and he would support the addition of county funds.

The center in St. Ignatius serves 30 children and offers,



SEN. JEAN TURNAGE, right, R-Lake County, presents a check for \$1,000 to Sister Cecelia, administrator, St. Ignatius Day Care Center. On the left is Jim Pippard, State 4 C's coordinator.

This brings to 13 the number of programs that have received money from the Governor's fund for "quality maintenance" of day care throughout Montana. State 4 C's administers this money.

Upon his visit to the St. Ignatius center, Sen. Turnage stated he would be in favor of amending the day care financing

according to Pippard, one of the most exciting ranges of activities of any of the day care centers. The children are offered an exceptional number of field trips, including visits to farms and logging operations, Pippard comments. They also may take part in pottery classes, and in the summer each child has a plot of land on which to grow his own garden.

Poverty Council

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—Montana Migrant Council: Rudie Arriola, Billings.

—Mexican-American Council of Montana: Tony Martinez, Billings.

—Montana State Welfare

Rights Organization: Kitty Yamprodit, Billings, and John Gildroy, Missoula.

—Montana Inter-Tribal Policy Board: Phil Beaumont, Crow Agency, and Pat Lefthand, Elmo.

SRS Gets Check From Settlement Of Antitrust Suit

A check for \$54,217 was presented by Atty. Gen. Robert Woodahl, as the new year began, to the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services as part of \$234,643 obtained by the state in an antitrust suit.

Woodahl said the suit, brought by Montana and other states against five pharmaceutical companies was settled about four years ago in federal court in New York.

Distribution of Montana's portion of the \$100 million settlement was determined by the court, he said.

Complaints in the suit alleged the firms were guilty of conspiring to fix prices.

Theodore Carkulis, director, Montana SRS, accepted the check which will be used to reimburse the state for drug purchases made by the department for Medicaid recipients.

In addition, hospitals in the state were reimbursed \$42,500 for drug purchases made by them.

Woodahl said more than \$120,000 from the settlement has been allocated to the Department of Institutions to purchase equipment needed at Warm Springs State Hospital and Boulder River School and Hospital.

By state law, money recovered by the state is supposed to go to the state general fund. Woodahl noted, however, that the judge held the money did not belong to

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SSI Alert Seeks Out Eligible

The first federal welfare checks under the Supplemental Security Income Program were in the mail January 2 to 3,056,300 Americans, including about 6,000 aged, blind and disabled persons in Montana.

The SSI program, which went into effect New Year's Day, is under the auspices of the Social Security Administration.

In Montana only a few hundred new claims for SSI have been received compared to the several thousand expected, reports Jack Sharp, administrator of the state social security office. Most of those receiving checks in January were transfers from the state welfare program, and the Social Security Administration is concerned that many individuals do not realize they are eligible.

In Montana a volunteer program known as SSI Alert has been organized to locate the estimated 5,000 to 6,000 persons still eligible in the state. SSI Alert is coordinated with the American Red Cross.

State program director is Phillip Gonzales of Great Falls. "Alert" volunteers are working out of the state's five Social Security districts.

The new SSI program is the result of welfare reform legislation proposed early in the Nixon administration. The original proposal was to transfer all state welfare programs to the federal structure but after much debate and compromise only the adult programs were changed over, and Aid to Families With Dependent Children and medi-

cal programs were left with the state.

The adult categories cover old age assistance, aid to the blind and aid to the disabled. More than 5,000 Montanans were being assisted by the state in the adult categories. They automatically were switched to the SSI program.

However, there still are more people who could qualify for assistance because the federal program is more liberal in its requirements, says Jack Carlson, administrator, Economic Assistance Division, Montana Social and Rehabilitation Services. For instance, the maximum an individual may have under Montana welfare is an income of \$125 a month and a \$15,000 house. Under SSI the maximum is \$140 a month income and a \$25,000 house.

According to Carlson, the

highest estimate the state has come up with is 4,700 new people eligible for supplemental security income.

Carlson says he isn't sure whether social security will be able to meet needs any better than welfare, but the shift is "administratively sound" and "I think it's a step in the right direction."

He points out that recipients of supplemental security income will continue to be eligible for social services from the State Economic Assistance Division, such as homemaker services and aid in placement in rest homes.

Americans 65 and over constitute 20 percent of the population and 10 percent of the nation's poor.

Office Building Again In Legislative Hands

The fate of a new office building to house all departments of the State Social and Rehabilitation Services once again rests in the hands of the legislature.

A decision in December by Atty. Gen. Robert Woodahl halted plans to begin a \$1.5 million office complex. The 1973 legislature had authorized the Department of Administration to enter into a lease-purchase agreement with a contractor.

Woodahl, however, ruled that only the State Land Board has the power to dispose of any interest in state-owned property.

The land board has to approve a lease on state land and does not have authority to endorse a lease that will exceed five years, according to Clarence Hester, chief, State Architecture and Engineering Bureau. The lease to the contractor for the SRS building site could extend be-

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MACCY To Study Bills Affecting Youth At February Meeting

The effects of selected state agencies and the 43rd Montana Legislative Assembly will be studied by the Montana Advisory Council on Children and Youth (MACCY) when it gathers in Helena February 7 and 8.

The Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction will be target agencies for special study by MACCY members.

To learn as much as possible about the status of legislation affecting children and youth will be MACCY's goal. Members of the council are 50 per cent 25 years of age and under and 50 per cent older than 25.

Members will meet with senators and representatives from their own districts and will attend committee hearings and House and Senate legislative assemblies.

They will become acquainted with heads of the three agencies to which they are giving special study and will follow legislation being supported and opposed by these departments. They will talk with Theodore Carkulis, director, SRS; Dr. John Anderson, director, HES, and Dolores Colburg, superintendent of public instruction. MACCY will delve into background and reasons for support or opposition of bills relating to these agencies.

The young people's council also will examine how these departments relate to the state legislature and to the individual legislators.

Dan Kelly Is New Chief Of Aging Services Bureau

Montana Aging Services Bureau has a new chief.

He is Daniel P. Kelly, formerly chief of Social and Rehabilitation Services' Special Services Development Bureau. In this capacity Kelly was involved in training and employment, volunteer programs, civil rights compliance and other activities which affect the entire department.

For the last eight years he has been employed in various capacities in the welfare and SRS departments.

Kelly became head of aging effective December 10. He took over for Lyle Downing who served as chief since the bureau's beginning in 1966 and who retired November 1.

Kelly was born and raised in Butte and attended grade and high schools there. His wife Betty also is from Butte. They have four daughters: Danita, age 28; Pamela, 24; Linda, 22; and Marilyn, 17.

Kelly is a 1939 graduate of the University of Montana with a degree in sociology and economics.

He served from 1942-46 in the U.S. Army Air Force.

Sanctions

(Continued from page 2)

hours to help. "However," he comments, "mistakes are made and that's what we're trying to cut down. If we don't, the federal government can require penalty sanctions—a situation which



DAN KELLY, new chief of Montana's Aging Services Bureau, studies a nutrition program for the state's elderly.

must be avoided.

"I'm not saying I don't like the quality control system," he continues. "I just don't like the way it's being applied. My concentration is on service to the people, not just on the amount of money being spent. Our agency has a mandate to serve the people."

Carlson says he is not the only one who feels this way. In anticipation of the sanctions, he reports that a number of states are planning joint legal action if sanctions are imposed upon any state. "We believe there is no legal basis for such sanctions," he adds.

Community Services Undergo Changes In Agency Makeup

A restructuring of the Community Services Division of Social and Rehabilitation Services has been taking place in the state office in Helena since Edward J. Malensek became the new administrator.

No longer in existence is the Social Service Field Bureau. Malensek believes that many changes have occurred which

indicated a need for a different approach to communications and activities between the state, district and county levels of community services.

William Welch, who had been chief of the field bureau, has been named chief of Family and Adult Services in the division. Don Sekora, social service specialist, remains in this bureau.



MONTANA'S FIRST LADY. Carol Judge, has received the first sheet of 1974 Easter Seals. Norma Ashby, the state's honorary Easter Seal chairman and producer of "Today in Montana" on the Montana Television Network, visited Mrs. Judge in her home to make the presentation.

Says Mrs. Judge, who is a registered nurse, "I am very interested in projects that help people."

Montana Social and Rehabilitation Services and the Easter Seal Society coordinate efforts on several programs for the handicapped. Presently these two agencies, local school districts, Montana State University and the State Board of Health are working together on audiological units in Great Falls, Butte and Bozeman.



Being transferred to this bureau is the Work Incentive Unit headed by Leslie Kampf.

Margaret Stuart has been moved from chief of Family and Adult Services to chief of the Child Welfare Services Bureau. Remaining with that bureau is social services specialist Norma Cutone.

Joseph Roe will continue to serve as consultant on child welfare.

The other bureaus and units within the division have not changed. These include the Children and Youth Program Unit headed by Gerry Fenn; Community Coordinated Child Care, Jim Pippard, director; Youth Development Bureau, Shirley Miller, chief, and Aging Services, Dan Kelly, chief.

State Desires To Play Host To Conventions

Tourism, our state's third largest industry, will be affected by the fuel crisis, observes the Montana Convention and Tour Office.

One means of reducing some of the anticipated losses in revenue, the office stresses, is through increased convention activity.

As the convention-tour people say, "Many employees within the state's agencies belong to organizations that hold meetings and conventions in other states. Montana, the 'Last of the Big Time Spenders' is an excellent site for your organizations' meetings."

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Mountain-Plains Prov



Building Trades

The Mountain-Plains Program—an educational, career guidance project—has passed the half-way point in its projected five-year existence.

Starting in 1971 with an initial grant from the Office of Education, the program has developed into a family-centered, residential, career education enterprise.

Utilizing the vacant housing, shop and office facilities at Glasgow Air Force Base, Mountain-Plains offers career guidance, occupational preparation, education and family services.

Currently the program is operating at peak capacity with some 200 families participating from Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska, according to Pat Williams, Montana coordinator for the program.

Mountain-Plains recruits applicants through its state coor-

dinators' offices located in each state capitol.

Career preparation courses offered at Mountain-Plains are: office education, lodging (hotel-motel) services, food service, building trades, carpentry, electrical and plumbing skills, refrigeration and air conditioning



Office

Small Engine and Automotive Repair Shop



ides Career Education



cation



Automotive Repairs

skills, heating and ventilating skills, drafting, mobility and transportation service, automotive, small engine repairs and marketing and distribution.

Mountain-Plains operates on an open entry, open exit basis which means participants come and go from the program freely.

Exploration of Career Opportunities



All courses are individualized and a student's progress depends upon his or her own initiative. Usual length of stay at Mountain-Plains ranges from six to nine months.

The students are paid an \$80 a week stipend, based on class attendance and participation.

Students who are qualified veterans also are eligible for G. I. Bill education benefits while attending Mountain-Plains.

Although career education is the primary goal of the Mountain-Plains Program, the project is set up to be residential and family oriented. Family services available include: health education, home skills, consumer education, leisure skills, family counseling, child care services such as help for mothers with disciplinary problems, and early childhood education which in-

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Mountain-Plains

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cludes nursery school and kindergarten classes.

Children in grades one through six may attend the grade school on the base. Older students go into Glasgow to school.

Furnished and unfurnished duplexes on base house the families. They pay \$40 a month rent which includes utilities.

In addition to recruiting students, the state coordinators are responsible for job development and placement for those who complete their course. The state office staffs work closely with local employment security offices, the state bureaus of personnel and other employment sources. Many applicants also are referred by county welfare offices.

Currently, according to Williams, 95 per cent of those completing Mountain-Plains training find employment and 82 per cent of those are employed in the areas of their occupational preparation.

Applications and information on qualifying and selection criteria are available from the Montana Mountain-Plains Office at 600 Cooke Street in Helena. The phone number is 443-3090.

Suit

(Continued from page 4)

the state as a whole and consequently, the state's share would be distributed to agencies that were affected by the alleged price fixing.

Conventions For Montana

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"Our new 'Invite a Convention to Montana' program will permit you to become personally involved in assuring the economic stability of your state is maintained."

Further information on how to invite a convention to Montana is available by writing the Convention & Tour Office, Drawer C, Department of Highways, Helena, Mt. 59601.

Building

(Continued from page 5)

yond five years.

Woodahl also says the Senate was one vote short of the constitutional requirement for passing any bill that would result in state indebtedness. This was the result of one legislator being ill and unable to participate in several weeks of legislative sessions.

Toward the end of 1973 building proposals were received, but a contract was not awarded.

The building will cost about a million and a half dollars and will be 45,000 to 50,000 square feet.

By using the lease-purchase method, it would be possible for SRS to have a building as soon as a proposal was accepted.

Local taxpayers would be at an advantage too because the state would pay taxes on the building throughout the leasing period.

Still another advantage would

be realized by the state because, although federal funds could not be used for construction, the federal government would, in the end, be paying two-thirds of the cost by contributing to rental of space.

Hearing Aids Now Provided For All Ages By Medicaid

Hearing aids now may be provided for persons of all ages under a new provision of Montana's Medical Assistance program.

The only stipulations are that the individual qualifies for benefits under Medicaid and is confirmed needy of a hearing device by a certified audiologist.

Until the recent expansion of this provision, Medicaid paid only for hearing aids for children.

Bill Ikard, chief of the State Medical Assistance Bureau, says all authorizations for hearing aids must be signed by the coordinator of the Hearing Conservation Program, State Department of Health and Environmental Sciences before hearing aids will be purchased. None will be paid for, he emphasizes, without the approval of the health department.

Persons with a hearing problem of their own or who have a child with a hearing difficulty may contact their local health or welfare departments to arrange for a hearing test. School nurses, local physicians and social workers also may refer individuals to the health department for hearing examinations.

DeLong Elected Chairman Of Aging Services Council

Joseph A. DeLong, county commissioner from Flathead County, was elected chairman of the Montana Aging Services Advisory Council at its last meeting.

Prior to his election, DeLong had served as a member of the advisory board.

As chairman he replaces Barclay Craighead who retired last fall.

Asked to fill DeLong's seat on the council was Val Galle, county commissioner from Deer Lodge County. Galle's name has been submitted to the Governor's Office for approval, according to Social and Rehabilitation Services.



JOE DELONG

Two Join Aging Bureau

A dietician and a research and education coordinator have joined the staff of the Montana Aging Services Bureau.

Mary Fauersinger is the dietary consultant-nutrition specialist. Walter Marshall is the research-education specialist.

Ms. Feuersinger has a Bachelor of Arts degree in foods and nutrition from Fort Wright College in Spokane where she was graduated cum laude in 1971. After college she took a dietician internship at Harperview Medical Center in Seattle. She has worked as a dietician for the veterans administration in Spokane.

Ms. Feuersinger, who is a native of Spokane, is a member of Alpha Chi and Kappa Gamma Pi scholastic honoraries and appeared in the 1971 issue of Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities. She belongs to the American and Montana Dietetic Associations.

Walter Marshall, well-known as executive producer of the Old Brewery Theatre in Helena, has a long background in communications and public relations.

He is a 1954 graduate of Washington State College with a BA in speech. He also did graduate work at WSC, and his studies included copywriting,

radio and television production and audio-visual equipment.

Before joining Aging Services he was director of information and education for the Workmen's Compensation Division, Department of Labor and Industry. He also has worked as general sales manager of Capitol City Television and KCAP Radio in Helena and as director of the Neighborhood Youth Corps of the Rocky Mountain Development Council.

Marshall has been president of Capitol Relations Consultants, a firm dealing with advertising

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APWA To Meet In Great Falls June 2, 3, 4

June 2, 3, and 4, the American Public Welfare Association will meet in Great Falls for its annual regional conference.

"American Public Welfare—Ideals of Services" will be the theme. Represented at the meeting will be Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, the Dakotas, Montana, Wyoming and two Canadian provinces.

Ed Malensek, administrator, Community Services, Montana Social and Rehabilitation Services, and Bob Piccolo, staff development specialist, SRS, are conference and program chairmen.

Speakers currently are being selected and the specific agenda is being settled. Keynote addresses and panel discussions will center on consumer, professional, managerial and legislative ideals of public welfare.

Medicaid Payments To Be Faster When New ID Cards Are Issued

Payment of Medicaid bills will be faster and more efficient as soon as a new process of issuing identification numbers to recipients of Medicaid services is complete, says William Ikard, chief of the State Medical Assistance Bureau.

Since the computer which figures the payments is programmed to recognize a number rather than an individual's name, all Medicaid recipients will be issued ID cards. Some recipients will be getting their cards in January and all recipients should have a card by March. Previously the county welfare offices have issued ID numbers.

December was one of 1973's biggest months for medical expenses, reports Ikard, and the payment system became somewhat bogged down because a number of claims lacked ID numbers.

A recent examination, he comments, shows that 80 per cent of all legitimate Medicaid bills bearing correct ID numbers are processed for payment within ten working days. However, when ID's are missing, medical services providers can expect delays in their payments. If there is no number the computer rejects the bill and the staff must search manually for the number.

The total cost for Medicaid claims during December was \$2,167,363, Ikard reports. Of this amount \$602,818 was paid

to hospitals and \$828,114 to nursing homes. The Medically Needy Program covered costs totalling \$135,424.

The largest Medicaid expenditures came from Cascade County — \$362,952. Cascade has the most welfare recipients in the state. Yellowstone, the second largest county for welfare purposes, recorded expenditures of \$291,203.

The total of the medical bills for clients in December was reduced \$349,681 by what is known as third-party payments, according to the medical assistance chief. These, he explains, include insurance payments and income such as social security which recipients may use to pay medical bills.

Among the services covered by Medicaid are hospitalization, nursing home care, drugs, dental services, medical supplies, ambulance and non-emergency transportation, surgery, laboratory work, x-rays, radiation treatment, physician's care and family planning.

Under Medicaid two-thirds of the costs of these services are paid by the federal government with about one-sixth each paid by the state and the county.

Automobile accidents and driving mishaps are the chief cause of spinal cord injuries.

Veterans To See Increased Benefits In Pension Checks

Increased benefits will be reflected in February Veterans Administration pension checks for disabled veterans and survivors of deceased veterans, according to Charles C. Walter, director, Fort Harrison, VA Center.

A cost-of-living increase in VA benefits was authorized by a law signed by President Nixon December 6, 1973. The law became effective January 1.

Walter says the increase will average 10 per cent for wartime veterans and widows on VA pension rolls and parents drawing dependency and indemnity compensation. Increased pension payments also will go to children of veterans.

Pensions are paid by the VA on the basis of need to veterans permanently and totally disabled from nonservice causes and to widows and children of veterans who died of non-service-connected disabilities.

DIC payments are made to widows, unmarried children under 18 and certain parents of veterans and servicemen who died of service-connected disabilities. The new law increases DIC rates only for parents, Walter notes.

Other highlights of the new law include:

—Maximum pension payable to veterans without dependents increased from \$30 to \$50 a month, if hospitalized more than

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Many Persons Eligible For Medically Needy Have Not Yet Applied

Only about 800 of the nearly 14,000 Montanans eligible for the Medically Needy Program have applied, reports Jack Carlson, administrator, Economic Assistance Division, Montana Social and Rehabilitation Services.

The program, which has been supported by Gov. Thomas Judge since he was in the legislature, is an attempt to keep people off the welfare rolls, says Carlson.

"Some people," he adds, "have been coming on welfare because they've had catastrophic medical expenses, and this program can help in that kind of situation."

To be eligible, a person's income may be one-third above welfare standards. In determining if a person is eligible, says Carlson, any major medical expenses can be subtracted from the family income to bring him down to the qualifying level.

Persons who think they may be eligible for the Medically Needy Program should apply at their local county welfare office.

Those who qualify for assistance as medically needy must pay a premium of one to five dollars a month to remain eligible for free medical services.

To qualify to have medical

expenses picked up by the state a single person may earn from \$125 to \$166 a month. A couple's income can be no more than \$280 a month and a family of four can qualify with a monthly income of \$371 or less.

About 64 per cent of the total costs are paid with federal tax dollars. The state contributes 18 per cent and the county the remaining 18 per cent. The state pays the county's share if the recipient is a ward of the state or has lived in Montana for less than a year.

New People In Aging

(Continued from page 11) and public and governmental relations. He has served as chief clerk of the Montana House of Representatives and secretary of the Montana State Senate.

Marshall's long record of activities, honors and awards include service in all state and regional offices of the Veterans of Foreign Wars as well as all 12 major national VFW committees.

He has been listed in Who's Who in the World of Commerce and Industry, Who's Who in the West and Who's Who in American Politics. Marshall's name also has appeared in the Book of Prominent Americans.

He has been active in the local and district Exchange Clubs and received the Book of Golden Deeds, the U.S. Exchange Clubs' highest national award.

Among the organizations to which Marshall belongs are the Last Chance Press Club and the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions.

Pension Checks Show Increases

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two months.

—Pension for veterans with no dependents and incomes of not more than \$300 annually increased from \$130 to \$143 a month.

—Pension for veterans with one dependent and incomes of not more than \$500 annually increased from \$140 to \$154 a month.

—Payments to widows with no dependents and incomes of not more than \$300 a year increased from \$87 to \$96 a month.

—Death pension rates for children increased from \$42 monthly plus \$17 monthly for each additional child to \$44 monthly plus \$18 monthly for each additional child.

Additional information on pension benefits is available at the Fort Harrison VA Center or from representatives of local veterans organizations.

VA Reaches Million Mark In Admissions

Officials of the Veterans Administration say that admissions to VA hospitals passed the million mark for the first time in history during 1973. Of that total, 132,222 were for Vietnam era veterans.

Charles C. Walter, director of the Fort Harrison VA Center, said that the total had reached 1,007,228 by the end of last year. He said 2,348 patients were admitted to the hospital at Fort Harrison.



DAY CARE CHILDREN respond to opportunities for learning and play in settings conducive to their enjoyment.

Licensing, Choosing Day Care Require Special Consideration

About 25,000 Montana children spend some part of their time in day care homes or centers, estimates James Pippard, coordinator for State Community Coordinated Child Care (4 C's) in Helena.

"About 80 per cent of the children are cared for in private homes," Pippard notes.

Anyone caring for three or more children from unrelated families for five or more consecutive weeks must apply for a state license, according to a 1965 Montana statute.

There is no charge for a license and the procedure is simple, says Ann Bolstad of the State Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

"When a day care mother or

center applies for a license, I make arrangements to go to the site for a personal interview," Ms. Bolstad explains.

She discusses the number of children to be cared for and checks to see that fire and health standards are met. "I also look at the amount of play space and I try to determine the day care mother's philosophy toward children," Ms. Bolstad adds.

A few urban areas including Helena and Billings require workshop attendance before a day care mother can receive her license, according to Ron Mullis, 4 C's child care specialist.

Once licensed, day care homes and centers are listed with the county welfare departments, and anyone can call for a listing.

Ms. Bolstad suggests taking children to the home or center where they will be cared for to get their reaction before making a final decision as to where they will stay.

"And be certain," she cautions, "you leave complete records on your children, including special physical or behavioral problems as well as a telephone number at which you can always be reached."

Mullis suggests several points parents should check when looking at prospective child care homes or centers.

1. Assess the physical setting, play space, type of toys and general safety. Is the yard fenced? Are cleaning supplies, garbage and similar safety hazards kept out of toddlers' reach?



FILLING IN your own outline lets you be whatever you want.

2. Is there adequate adult supervision for the number of children being cared for?
3. Do you and the supervising adult agree on the amount of television time allowed children, general guides for discipline, amounts of organized and free time?

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MACCY Prints Legislative Guide To Help Montanans Become Involved

A few copies of the Legislative Handbook for Montanans still are available from the Montana Advisory Council on Children and Youth (MACCY).

The 27-page booklet was produced to help Montanans "overcome their awe and apathy barriers and to develop their potential for involvement".

The informational publication begins by telling where to find the chambers of the Montana Senate and House of Representatives and goes on to describe how to learn what is on the daily agenda of each during the legislative session.

When, where and how to contact the legislators are discussed.

The handbook describes the legislative leadership and the committee system and provides suggestions for testifying on a bill. It describes lobbying, voting and the way a bill becomes a law.

Suggestions are made in the booklet as to what an individual can do in the law-making process. Also provided is a list of information sources for such things as copies of bills, lists of lobbyists and voting records.

The handbook was prepared by Opal Winebrenner, MACCY member, and Gerry Fenn, community planning coordinator, children and youth programs, SRS. MACCY member Robin Evans, who invented the

MACCY logo, did the photography and designed the cover. Jerry Dalton, another member of MACCY, helped gather information for the publication.

Five thousand copies of the legislative handbook were printed. They were mailed to Montana grade and high schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities; children and youth groups and organizations; legislators, and, upon request, to individuals. The address to send for the legislative handbook is: Children and Youth Unit, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, P. O. Box 1723, Helena, Mt. 59601.

Licensing Bill Gives A Rise To Disparity

Coming before this session of the legislature is a bill to license social workers in Montana.

HB 652 has aroused disagreement among many individuals within the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services and has sparked interest of others, especially in light of the recent authorization for sterilization of two 13-year-old Southern girls by a person calling himself a social worker.

Opinions vary within the SRS agency on the effectiveness of the bill. Proponents feel it is a genuine protection for the public. Opponents say it would protect only the self-interests of social workers with undergraduate and graduate degrees. A number of persons have no quarrel with the concept of licensing but have reservations about this particular bill.

If the bill passes it will contain a blanket clause to license all employees currently holding social worker positions with SRS, so no one presently working as a social worker would lose his job.

One source of contention over the bill is that it is too exclusionary. For instance, community organization workers and rehabilitation counselors would not be able to be licensed as social workers although much of the job they perform constitutes social work. The bill's opponents point out that this is particularly important in rural areas of Montana where getting licensed social workers would be difficult.

Opponents maintain that a degree is not necessary to be competent.

Proponents say the public places a value on educational knowledge and background and the licensing bill is designed to guarantee professionalism among social workers.

The bill would allow a person to become licensed if he had four years' experience under supervision of a social worker.

Another controversial point relates to a Board of Social Work Examiners and whether its membership should be solely professional or mainly made up of lay persons whose interests licensing is designed to protect.

The trend among states is toward licensing, say those favoring the bill.



Information about the fourth national Foster Parents Association conference, April 25-28 in Spokane, may be obtained from Ann Burds, Montana Social and Rehabilitation Services, P. O. Box 1723, Helena, Mt. 59601.

Legislature

(Continued from page 1)

As Governor Judge said last year, the Medically Needy Program provides "an incentive for people, who can and should, to go out and find a job without forfeiting their medical benefits."

House Bill 68 was passed into law to allow for local funding of day care centers. An early childhood education bill was passed allowing public funding of kindergartens.

A child abuse law was amended mandating SRS and other agencies to assume responsibility for the reporting of child neglect and abuse cases.

Passage of another act provides protective services through SRS to all developmentally disabled persons, that is persons suffering nervous system disorders such as mental retardation, cerebral palsy or epilepsy which originated before the person's eighteenth birthday. Previously these persons were protected by law only until they turned 18 years of age.

Subsidized adoption was passed by the legislature to encourage the adoption of "hard to place" children.

The definition of dependent and neglected children was changed to include young persons up to and including age 17. The previous age was 16.

The Department of Revenue was given authority to investigate cases of suspected welfare fraud and non-support and to prosecute when necessary at the request of SRS.

This session a number of bills affecting SRS are expected to be considered, including legislation regarding welfare residency requirements, discrimination against the physically handicapped, supplemental security income, aid to dependent children, and non-payment of child support.

Legislators are predicting that this session will not run over 60 days.

Day Care

(Continued from page 14)

4. If you are placing a baby in day care for any length of time, parents should be clear on desired feeding schedules, sleeping time and general attention.
5. What kinds of menus are offered for meals and snacks?
6. Do you agree on the rates to be charged?

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7. Is the day care home or center licensed?

Montana Responds To Needs Of Poor

In response to a petition by Montana low income groups, the monthly charge to persons on Medicaid for prescription drugs has been lowered from 50 cents to 25 cents.

The change is effective in March report medical assistance personnel. The reduction was necessary, they say, because families with many members and large medical expenses could not meet the 50 cent charge.

Address all communications to Information Unit, P. O. Box 1723, Helena, Montana 59601

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